An Epistolary Ramble.

BY J. H. WORST.

It is Sabbath. The lovliest of northern summer days is paying its respects and we are resting from the toil of last week preparatory to continuing the most magnificent harvest this or any other country has ever realized. We have learned to smile at the foolish prejudices that exist in the East, against our climate and country, and care but little whether those who know nothing about it, like it or not so long as we are delighted. But in this as in almost all other respects those talk loudest and longest who know least about the subject in hand. 'Tis natural.

Brother Dr. J. E. Roop of Fairfield, Iowa, long and favorably known in Ashland, accompanied by Harry, paid our country a visit and invested in a quarter section of land, then started homeward again last week. The doctor has made no perceptible change, socially, since last we met which is a sufficient recommendation to all who know him and doubly assuring that we were all delighted with his visit.

During his visit a number of the brethren and sisters held a meeting and decided to organize a church within two weeks.

Our meetings at the school house are well attended and the interest seems to be growing, and this in spite of the fact that personally we would like to be exempted from ministerial responsibilities.

As a diversion and amusement, I have just been reading the Report of the Brethren's Annual Meeting of 1885. Their "tract committee," alias "society" is a step in the right direction as was also the "sisters' convention;" but outside of them the meeting was as barren of practical thought or work as a snow bank is of flowers. The two questions from Southern Ill. relating to the communion immediately following the supper, and the sisters breaking bread were both well put and well sustained by the progressive element from that locality, but where, as in that case, the clear-cut and incisive Gospel comes in conflict with the superstitions of dead and dying elders the Gospel was wholly ignored. Never were the illogical reasonings (?) and false colorings of such worthies as R. H. Miller more ridiculously exploded by Gospel dynamite than accomplished by M'Clure, Banimon and others, yet the two fundamental pillars upon Dunkardism rests were immovable, viz., when customs and Gospel conflicts the custom supercedes, and where any real scriptural interpretation is demanded or where there is a difference of opinion relative to the meaning of the Gospel, this great A. M. has not the courage to express an answer. It was the same when the supper on or off the table was agitated, when the *mode* of feetwashing was on the docket, and now when this great Annual Meeting that presumes to define the "spirit and meaning of the Gospel" and make it mandatory is asked the honest question, "What is the primary object in anointing," "Is it according to the Gospel for the communion to immediately follow the supper," and is it according to the Gospel for the sisters to break bread the same as brethren at the communion? etc. She grapples them as an infant would grapple a saw log.

The Gospel is against her customs but that makes no difference, and where the common scope of mentality menaces her "definition" she is evasive. I repeat it; take the two modes of feetwashing, the two forms of supper, the primary object in anointing, the plain questions relating to the communion, and the breaking of bread by the sisters—all pertinent questions and constituting the fundamental principles of the German Baptist faction and every one of which is clearly untangled by the plain Word of God, yet this Annual Meeting never did and never will venture an open, frank, and honorable expression of which is right and which is wrong, simply because the traditions of the elders is at antipodes with the law of God and they love the law none the less but the traditions more. But take something like this: "How is it considered when an elder baptizes an applicant outside his official territory and fails to ask the applicant all the questions required by the minutes of Annual Meeting. See Art. II, and does not make a humble acknowledgement etc. Ans. Considered that it is contrary to the Gospel and unless he makes a humble acknowledgement we cannot fellowship him.

The latter and not the former constitutes the meat that Annual Meeting eats and grows so great. The calibre of Annual Meeting is too infinitely small to grapple with a real live issue in a statesman like way, or to sit as a body and gravely decide whether the Gospel requires the salutation to come between the supper and comcommunion or required it to be omitted.

No wonder Bro. Robert Miller plead so for custom, and gave the whole thing away by virtually saying if you drop the salutation between the supper and communion because there is no Gospel for it, on the same ground you could omit reading the 18th chapter of Matth. before baptism etc. and went to say in effect that much of the German Baptist fabric would tumble to the ground if you insist on Gospel proof for everything.

Alas! how have the mighty fallen? Gospel proof indeed? Yes that's it. If *that* is what you want and that alone, the G. B. organization will prove a lonesome journey.

Well, after its perusal, I can rise and testify that I thank God that I am no part of it in sympathy, or otherwise, and have not the faintest thought that I shall ever desire to belong to such an outfit. My desire is to look forward for wisdom and not to the tombs of the buried past; to be a foreman and one that dares to not only have convictions but to express them. I desire to worship God and not man, and ask the supreme privilege in doing this to not be molested by a host of guardians who at best will have all they can do to attend to their own soul interests. I despise meddlesomeness in religious matters and everything intended to promote it. To stand apart, unprejudiced, and careless of consequences, and the Annual Meeting of 1885, the ruling of its moderator, and matter it worked upon as well as the disposition of its queries, is not only amusing, but much of it is silly.

The Calling of Us Gentiles.

BY JOHN NICHOLSON.

This calling was an event unexpected by all the Apostles for several years after the day of Pentecost. The ancient prophets spoke of it in the most elevated style. David's and Isaiah's hallowed lips foretold it. They portrayed it in glowing colors, in such enraptured strains, that we almost tremble to affirm that it was an event unknown to, and unexpected by all the holy Twelve. But when we reflect that Messiah's death, and resurrection from the dead were events of superlative importance to the whole family of man that these events were not only revealed by the Spirit of prophecy, in language of purer, of more perspicuous and sublime expression than mortals filled with enthusiastic order, utter; and that those events though the subject of Christ's parables and familiar conversation with his Apostles were not understood by the wisest in that school. One of his school said "be it far from the Master it shall not be so done unto thee" and that another of his classmates said, with respect to his resurrection from the dead, Except I see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger to the print of the nails and my hand to his side I will not believe. These considerations with many others somewhat diminish our surprise at finding other subjects of luminous prophecy unknown to the Apostles. After clearer visions of Messiah's kingdom, Peter by the Spirit said the ancient prophets searched after the meaning of the oracle which they delivered, and that they did not utter these prophecies for themselves or for the people of their day but for those who believe the record that God has given of His Son.

Paul thus speaks: "The mystery of Christ in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it is now revealed to His holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, and partakers of His promise concerning Christ through the Gospel." These oracles justify the declaration that calling of the Gentiles to the full fruition of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ was an event unknown to, and unexpected by the prophets of antiquity, as well as by the Apostles, until revealed to them by the new revelation of the Spirit. Peter, to whom the Master committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the embassador of heaven's eternal throne, having opened to the Jews the doors of faith, having to his own nation unlocked the gates of righteousness and life on the triumphant Pentecost, was sent for by an angel of heaven, was tutored by visions of sheetfuls of creatures, once unclean but now sanctified to his use, was commanded by the illuminating Spirit to open by the same keys, to the Gentiles, the much bolted door of all-victorious faith. To the house of the centurion with all speed he hasted and having heard from a Roman Soldier's lips the glorious intelligence that the kingdom of grace through the Prince of Life was about to extend over all nations, and having viewed the throng of Gentiles once unclean he gave vent to the overflowing of his soul saying, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons but in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. He opened the door of faith, he proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation and life through Jesus Christ. He proved to them that to Messiah all the prophets gave testimony that "through his name whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins. The Spirit of God, with these words, fell on them, they believed and were baptized. Now the great tidings, now ten thousand tongues with ecstasy pronounced "Then hath God granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life. The question was among some of the pharisaic Christians of the Jews shall we of the circumcision unite in one body with these uncircumcised ones? No, let them first be circumcised and keep the law, else we will close the door of our communion. Some of the stricter sort said to Peter Why did you go in and eat with the uncircumcised Gentiles. Peter tells the wonderful tale "What was I that I could withstand God?" If He gave them the same gifts as he did unto us in the beginning: if He made no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith, why should I refuse to enter their houses and eat with them.

Many reports went out about this matter. When Paul and Barnabas had no small dissention with them on this topic, having heard that all the Apostles were assembled at Jerusalem the Gentiles sent thither at once to have this matter settled. The Apostles and elders and the whole church met in the Metropolis and talked the matter over. Peter, true to his purpose, and acquainted better than they all with the first calling of the gentiles, in his usual warmth exclaims, "why" says he, "tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples?" Therefore no yoke should be put upon anyone. All whom Christ hath made free are free indeed. At one time we, gentiles, were without Christ, having no hope and without Father in the world, but now in Christ Jesus are we made nigh by the blood of Christ. Through Christ we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.—Hudson, Iowa.

I'm Too Busy.

A merchant sat at his office desk; various letters were spread before him: his whole being was absorbed in the intricacies of his business. A zealous friend of mankind entered the office.

"Mr. —, I want to interest you a little in a new effort for a benevolent cause", said the good man.

The merchant cut him off by replying "Sir, you must excuse me, but really I'm too busy at present to do anything."

"When shall I call again, sir?"

"I cannot tell. I'm very busy. I'm busy every day. Excuse me sir; I wish you good morning."

Then bowing the intruder out of the office, he resumed the study of his papers. The merchant had frequently repulsed the friends of humanity in this manner. No matter what was their object he was always too busy to listen to their claims. He had even told his minister that he was too busy for anything but to make money.

But one morning a disagreeable stranger stepped very softly to his side, laying a cold, moist hand upon his brow, and saying, "Go home with me." The merchant laid down his pen; his head grew dizzy; his stomach felt faint and sick; he left the counting room, went home and retired to his bed chamber. His unwelcome visitor had followed him and now took his place by the bed-side, whispering ever and anon, "You must go with me." A cold chill settled upon the merchant's heart; dim spectres of ships, notes, and lands, fluttered before his excited mind. Still his pulse beat slower; his heart heaved heavily; thick films gathered over his eyes, his tongue refused to speak. Then the merchant knew that the name of the visitor was death.

All other claimants on his attention, except the friends of Mammon, had always found a quick dismissal in the magic phrase, I'm too busy. Humanity, mercy, religion, had alike begged his influence, means and attention in vain; but when death came, the excuse how powerless. He was compelled to have leisure to die. Let us beware how we make ourselves too busy to secure life's great end. When the excuse rises to our lips, and we are about to say we are too busy to do good, let us remember we cannot be too busy to die.—SEL.